(b) if so, what steps Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (MUFTI MOHD. SAYEED): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Central Ministry of Tourism has taken up a number of schemes forwarded by the State/Union Territory Governments of North Eastern States for provision of infrastructure like accommodation, wayside amenities, internal transport in wildlife sanctuaries, water sports, etc.

Social forestry in Madhya Pradesh

766. SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total area covered by social forestry scheme so far in the State of Madhya Pradesh and the total expenditure incurred so far thereon;

(b) what percentage of trees planted are still surviving; and

(c) whether Government propose to take any initiative to ensure better survival rate of the trees?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) An area of 6.36 lakh ha. was afforested in the State of Madhya Pradesh during the Sixth Five Year Plan period on which an amount of Rs. 8063.39 lakh was spent.

(b) Assessment of survivals has been made on a sporadic and not very regular basis. It is felt that these evaluations are limited in their scope and hence do not point to any reliable conclusions.

(c) Survival is a factor of availability of a modicum of water and reasonable protection measures. Efforts are on to integrate soil conservation and water-specific schemes with programmes of afforestations, and to induce social fencing, in an effort to improve the survival rate.

Wood used for packing and transportation of horticulture products

767. SHRI BASUDEB MOHAPATRA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that about 26 million cubic meters of wood is used annually for packaging and transportation of horticulture products in the country; and

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken not to remove the trees from the forests for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) According to the report of a Task Force appointed by the Government of India, the requirement of wood for packing horticultural products in the country has been estimated as 5.636 million cubic metres.

(b) Government of India have taken the following steps to minimise the use of wood for manufacture of packing cases:—

(i) It has been decided to provide additional Central Assistance of Rs. 10 crores during 1986-87 and 3.70 crores during 1987-88 to the Government of Himachal Pradesh for contribution towards equity of the company proposed to be set up for manufacture of corrugated board cartons for packaging of fruits.

(iii) Guidelines have been issued king cartons for packing of fruits has been exempted from levy of excise duty.

(iii) Guidelines have been issued to the State Governments to restrict fellings in the hills above 1000 metres, at least for some years.